

home patients, impoverished children, the permanently disabled, and the neediest in our society can afford basic care. In fact, two-thirds of all Medicaid spending goes to caring for older adults and people with disabilities. The cost of long-term care, like in rehabilitation centers and nursing homes, is prohibitive. Medicaid serves as a lifeline for these individuals. And it is not an expensive program. In fact, compared to private sector health care costs, Medicaid is cheap, growing half as fast.

The GOP plan cuts Medicaid when physicians and hospitals can barely afford to treat these patients because of such low reimbursement rates. It is no mystery why Medicaid is beginning to strain State and Federal budgets. With so many Americans out of work, enrollment in Medicaid has skyrocketed as more and more families come to rely upon this safety net.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Medicaid is not too expensive. People are too poor. That's why we should be focused on creating new jobs. One hundred days into this new Republican Congress and not a single jobs bill.

Madam Speaker, this plan is not a price that I'm willing to pay. We can do better. We will do better. America's seniors are watching.

FUTURE OF MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. KISSELL) for 4 minutes.

Mr. KISSELL. Madam Speaker, from the time that I first came to Congress, I have continued to be a strong supporter of our seniors' issues and standing by our seniors. Today, I rise in support of another issue that our seniors are facing today, the issue of the future of Medicare.

We must stand by those who have stood by us as they enter into their senior years, and we must be strong in making sure that Medicare stays as a solid medical safety net for our seniors.

Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot about the Greatest Generation, that generation that fought World War II and worked in industries and raised families and came back and did so much to make America the great Nation as we know today. But, Madam Speaker, America is a great Nation, has been for many years, and will be for many years to come. And there is not just one Greatest Generation; there is a continuum of great generations.

I grew up in a very small town in North Carolina, and my heroes were those people—many of whom had fought in World War II—those teachers and those storekeepers and those people in a small town that raised many of my friends and myself and looked after us, whether in the school or church or wherever it might be. As these people that took care of us become seniors and they continue this throughout the Nation for generations to come, we

must take care of those that took care of us.

I was a high school history teacher for 7 years before coming to Congress, and I always told my students that you're not studying history by looking at pages in a book or looking at old pictures or paintings or whatever it might be; you are studying about people that have a story. As we talk today about our seniors and Medicare, we cannot forget that these are the people who took care of us. They cannot become just political bargaining chips and political theories. They are real people. They have real stories.

I want to talk briefly about two people that are especially important to me—my mom and dad. My dad grew up in that same small town that I did in North Carolina, fought in World War II, won a Bronze Star, came back, worked in the post office, and was happy just to be a part of helping in those ways that I talked about before. My mom grew up in Carroll County in Huntingdon, Tennessee, and came to North Carolina as a teacher and taught many generations. She is 96 years old, her birthday being last March 18. These are the heroes. These are the stories that we know, that all of us have. Whether our parents or grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, whatever they may be, we cannot forget about them as individuals; we cannot forget about their stories, and we cannot let them become just political bargaining chips.

The question that we must ask, Madam Speaker, is: Why did we need Medicare in the first place? What in our system didn't work, that didn't take care of our seniors, that required Medicare to come into being? We know the answer to that. And we must continue to have that guarantee of a strong support structure when our medical needs for our seniors must be met this way. We must stand by our seniors.

□ 1030

REPUBLICAN 2012 BUDGET PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) for 4 minutes.

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong opposition to the Republican budget plan and its effects on America's seniors. I believe that we must address our national deficit, but I believe we can do it in a responsible manner that does not hinder our fragile economy and does not risk important programs.

I support the Democratic budget proposal, which makes practical cuts to reduce our Nation's deficit but without hurting America's seniors and sacrificing their health and financial security.

Madam Speaker, the Republican plan is irresponsible. It would hurt America's seniors while giving enormous tax breaks to the top 2 percent of the

wealthiest Americans. It does nothing to create jobs but gives billions in corporate loopholes and subsidies to Big Oil. Most notably, the Republican plan would literally end Medicare. And while this may be a new plan, these are not new ideas.

The Republicans' 2012 budget attempts to do to Medicare what President Bush wanted to do to Social Security in 2005—privatize it and severely cut benefits. Madam Speaker, can you imagine if we had privatized Social Security in 2005 the way the Republicans wanted to do just before the biggest financial collapse since the Great Depression? Is that what we really want to do with Medicare? We cannot afford to have Wall Street control the fate of our seniors.

The Republican plan would convert Medicare into a voucher program that forces seniors to buy costly private insurance plans. It asks seniors, half of whom have less than \$19,000 a year in total income, to pay more and get less. If this plan were put in place, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the average senior would end up paying nearly three times more out-of-pocket expenses.

Meanwhile, the health care law enacted last year is already helping to close the gap in prescription drug coverage known as the doughnut hole and provides annual exams and preventive services. But a repeal of the health care law, as the Republican budget plan calls for, would eliminate these benefits. Madam Speaker, these benefits for Medicare patients are making a real difference in the lives of my constituents.

I recently heard from a 71-year-old woman from Sacramento who requires several expensive drugs to maintain her health. In October of 2010, she was worried about her ability to pay for her medication because she fell into the coverage gap. But she was relieved to learn that she would get \$250 in 2010 and that 50 percent of her costs would be reimbursed this year and even more would be reimbursed in the future. But now Republicans want to pull the rug out from under our seniors and their families.

What is astonishing to me is that in addition to privatization of Medicare, the Republican plan also goes after Medicaid. Instead of making real reform to the Medicaid program, the Republican budget calls for converting Medicaid into a block grant program. That would sharply reduce funding for seniors and low-income Americans on Medicaid so that it would not keep up with health care costs.

Medicaid helps keep our seniors in their homes and helps them afford nursing homes if they need them, but the Republican plan would leave seniors on their own and ignores the promise that our country has made from one generation to another.

Madam Speaker, the Federal budget should reflect our American values that have been passed down for generations where seniors earn the benefits

that they have paid into and have been promised and are able to enjoy their retirement after working hard in their careers.

That is why I will continue to fight to protect the dignity of America's seniors and protect them against the devastating effects of the Republican budget proposal.

REPUBLICAN 2012 BUDGET PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 1½ minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As we're about to close this part of the legislative morning expressions of belief, I would just like to say that for decades, so many people have said that we can't tell the difference between Democrats and Republicans. Well, I think that is over, that the Republicans, in their Ryan-projected budget, have made it abundantly clear that there is a big difference.

All Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and independents—know that we have a tremendous deficit, that the interest is just blocking out programs that we have to support. While it's abundantly clear that there is an emergency that we have to deal with, the Republicans' method of doing this, through the Ryan budget, is to look for the most vulnerable people that we have—the poor that are sick, the older people that are sick, our young people that are trying to get an education.

It seems to me if we take a look at the alternative, in investing now for the future of this great country of ours, to make certain that education is a part of what we're doing, investing in our infrastructure so that as we pay off the debt we are still investing for the future, this is what the Democratic Party is all about. And, Madam Speaker, I truly believe this is what America is all about.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 11 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 36 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 11 a.m.

□ 1100

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington) at 11 a.m.

PRAYER

Rev. Arthur Cavitt, St. Charles Lwanga Center, St. Louis, Missouri, offered the following prayer:

In times like these, we need the Almighty Good Shepherd to be with us.

Lead us, Lord, through valleys and shadows onwards to straight paths. In times like these, we need the God of the breakthrough to give us the ability to see transforming possibilities.

Guide us, Lord, through the challenges of our modern lives where sometimes hope is juxtaposed with despair. Grant that this august body will continue to move towards the common good, mindful of the inherent dignity that You, God, have placed within us.

Grant that our hearts will resound blessed are we among nations. Blessed are we who dwell in this place and claim the potential for more love, peace, and inclusion for all people to partake of the fruits of this magnificent land.

Shepherd us, Lord. The promise of Your goodness and compassion sustains our work and sustains our offering of thanksgiving this hour and evermore. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WOODALL led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REV. ARTHUR CAVITT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our guest chaplain, one of my

outstanding constituents, Father Arthur Cavitt.

Father Art, as he is known in St. Louis, is a leader in religious outreach and educational development efforts within the African American Catholic community. His St. Charles Lwanga Center, located in North St. Louis City, offers Bible study, pastoral care, and conducts an outstanding youth ministry.

Father Art's spiritual leadership, through his center and as an educator at Cardinal Ritter College Preparatory, is reaching thousands of young people, changing lives, and helping to reclaim neighborhoods that have seen far too much violence, intolerance and pain.

Father Art is bringing the church's message of love, truth, tolerance, and mutual understanding to those in our community who need it most. I am very honored to salute him today as our special guest.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

THE VICTIMS OF CRIMES ACT

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Victims of Crimes Act, or VOCA, as it's called, is a wonderful idea that requires convicted criminals to pay into a fund that is used by crime victims. It is the idea that criminals pay for the system they have created. They pay rent on the courthouse, so to speak, by putting money in a fund that goes to these victims. This VOCA fund is about \$6 billion. This is not taxpayer money. It is money that belongs to victims. But Federal bureaucrats seem to want to rob this fund and pay for other Federal programs.

We cannot allow this money to be taken from victims of violent crime. This money should be placed in a lockbox so it is only used by crime victims and victim services.

During this National Crime Victims Week, our Nation must constantly be sensitive to the needs of people who have been robbed, assaulted, and harmed by criminals. We as a nation are judged not by the way we treat the rich, the powerful, and the famous, but by the way we treat the innocent, the children, the elderly, and victims of crime. And that's just the way it is.

SPEECHLESS

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend my remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?